

**Statement des
Bundesministers des Auswärtigen
Heiko Maas, MdB**

**anlässlich des Treffens der VNSR-
Mitglieder im Arria-Format zum
Friedensprozess in Afghanistan**

***”What can the Security Council do to
support the peace process in
Afghanistan?”***

20. November 2020, New York / Berlin

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The **start of Afghan peace negotiations** in September was a **moment of hope**.

But we all knew that the **way forward would be difficult**.

Today, as you all stated, we see **positive developments**, but also **serious difficulties**.

Moving ahead, I conclude from our discussion that the following **points** will be key:

- Afghanistan needs a **ceasefire** – the endless and excessive violence has to stop!

- The Afghan Government and the Taliban should **step up** their **negotiation efforts** – irrespective of external factors. There is no time to lose!
- The **international community** needs to **be steadfast in supporting** Afghanistan.

The **withdrawal of international troops must remain conditions-based:**

progress in the peace process and the security situation on the ground are the essential factors. This has always been the consensus among Allies in our support to the Afghan Security Forces.

Our goal remains a peace settlement that preserves the **fundamental achievements of the last nineteen years** and of **Afghanistan's constitutional order.**

Like the Afghan people, we want an Afghanistan

- where all communities live in peace,
- where **human rights** and **fundamental freedoms** are respected and protected
- and from where no **threats to other countries** evolve.

Germany will continue its **longstanding assistance** to Afghanistan and the peace process:

- Next week, we will reaffirm our support at the ***2020 Afghanistan Conference*** in Geneva.
- We will garner broader backing for the peace process in the ***“International Peace Support Group”***, which we hope to launch very soon.
- We will also continue working with **partners from Norway, Qatar, Uzbekistan and Indonesia.**
- And we will ensure a proper **hand-over of our co-penholdership** of the Afghanistan dossier to our Security Council successors.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Only Afghans can decide their future. But the **international community** – and the **Security Council** in particular – need to support them. Together, we have gone a long way down the **road to peace**. And it is on this road we should continue.

Thank you very much!